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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Ella Louise Park Lawrence, known as the Mother of
3 the Illinois State Flag, was born May 13, 1857, during a period
4 of great upheaval preceding the Civil War; and

5 WHEREAS, Ella Park Lawrence's father, George Park,
6 published an abolitionist newspaper in Parkville, Missouri,
7 where at that time there were ongoing bloody conflicts between
8 pro-slavery factions and abolitionists; her father's printing
9 press was thrown into the Missouri River in 1855 by a
10 pro-slavery mob, and he slept in caves for several months to
11 avoid being killed; after the Civil War, Parkville's commercial
12 activity and population declined and, in 1875, George Park
13 established Park College (now known as Park University), which
14 reinvigorated the town that he founded; and

15 WHEREAS, The experiences of her childhood stayed with Ella
16 Park Lawrence for the rest of her life; she was devoted to the
17 flag of the United States, and she donated flags to schools and
18 various organizations; and

19 WHEREAS, In 1874, Ella Park Lawrence began attending Knox
20 College in Galesburg, but she did not complete her studies
21 there; while she was a student at Knox College, she met George
22 A. Lawrence, a lawyer and author, and they married on October

1 18, 1882 at the Park homestead in Putnam County; during their
2 marriage, they lived in several houses in Galesburg; shortly
3 after her time at Knox College, she enrolled at Vassar College;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, In 1890, the National Society of the Daughters of
6 the American Revolution (DAR), a women's patriotic lineage
7 society, was organized in Washington, D.C.; in order to become
8 a member, a woman had to provide documents proving she was a
9 descendant of a Revolutionary War participant; and

10 WHEREAS, The Rebecca Parke Chapter of DAR was organized in
11 Galesburg on January 23, 1901; Rebecca Gibson Parke was an
12 11-year-old girl living near Lexington, Massachusetts when the
13 Revolutionary War began; her father, Isaac Gibson, and 5 of her
14 8 brothers responded to the alarm at Lexington in April of
15 1776; she was an ancestor to 2 members of the new DAR chapter,
16 Ella Park Lawrence and Marietta Howe Ervin; and

17 WHEREAS, Ella Park Lawrence became a charter member of the
18 Rebecca Parke Chapter, and, in 1906, she was elected regent of
19 the chapter, serving 4 years; in 1911, she was chosen as the
20 State regent of the Illinois DAR; and

21 WHEREAS, All of the state regents were required to attend
22 the National Congress at the DAR headquarters in Washington,

1 D.C. each year; while attending one of these meetings, Ella
2 Park Lawrence noticed that there was no flag representing
3 Illinois hanging among those in Memorial Continental Hall; in
4 fact, the State had no flag at all; she decided this situation
5 should be remedied and felt that the 5,500 DAR members in
6 Illinois were just the ones to do it; and

7 WHEREAS, Ella Park Lawrence started writing letters and
8 visiting chapters across the State to promote the idea of
9 adopting a design for a State flag; she also contacted State
10 officials and members of the General Assembly, trying to create
11 interest in the adoption of a State flag; she did not succeed
12 in her goal during her tenure as state regent, but she
13 continued her work; and

14 WHEREAS, On April 1, 1914, Ella Park Lawrence sent a letter
15 to every DAR chapter in Illinois offering a prize of \$25 (\$500
16 in today's dollars) for the winning flag design; and

17 WHEREAS, The judging was led by Secretary of State Lewis G.
18 Stevenson, father of future Governor Adlai E. Stevenson; the
19 prize was awarded to the Rockford chapter; the design consisted
20 of the Great Seal of Illinois on a white background; and

21 WHEREAS, The General Assembly passed legislation
22 authorizing a State flag, and it became law on July 6, 1915;

1 the legislation specified that the State seal could be
2 reproduced in black or color on a white background and the
3 Secretary of State was required to oversee the use of the seal
4 on the flags; and

5 WHEREAS, Ella Park Lawrence had 5 "first flags" made; she
6 gave one of the flags to the National Headquarters of the DAR,
7 one to the State DAR, one to Secretary of State Stevenson, one
8 to Governor Edward Deneen, and one to the Illinois State
9 Historical Society; and

10 WHEREAS, Fifty-four years after the Illinois State Flag was
11 officially designated, a young Chief Petty Officer serving in
12 Vietnam, Bruce McDaniel from Waverly, observed the state flags
13 hanging in his mess hall; he pointed out that the Illinois flag
14 was difficult to identify because the name of the State did not
15 appear on it; and

16 WHEREAS, Representative Jack Walker of Lansing introduced
17 the bill to add the word 'Illinois' below the Great Seal on the
18 flag; it was passed by the State Legislature on September 17,
19 1969; Governor Richard B. Ogilvie signed the legislation and
20 appointed a commission to set standards for production of the
21 flag and a uniform design; and

22 WHEREAS, Ella Park Lawrence continued to give flags to

1 schools and organizations until her death on March 17, 1924; a
2 week after her funeral, the Rebecca Parke Chapter of the DAR
3 conducted a memorial service in her name; Myra Patch, one of
4 the speakers, said of Ella Park Lawrence: "Tremendous in
5 energy, fervent in patriotism, resourceful in plans, Mrs.
6 Lawrence not only gave of her money, her time, her thought, and
7 her physical strength, but she also had the happy faculty of
8 inspiring others to do likewise - by the high standard of her
9 work as State Regent of Illinois, Mrs. Lawrence added greatly
10 to the honor and fame of our chapter"; therefore, be it

11 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
12 NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
13 recognize the 100th Anniversary of the creation of the flag of
14 the State of Illinois on July 6, 2015; and be it further

15 RESOLVED That the State of Illinois honors all of the
16 individuals and organizations who helped with the design and
17 creation of the State Flag; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
19 presented to the Governor, the Secretary of State, and the
20 Illinois Senate.